

Contents

Introduction: The “Common Sense” of Slavery in the Free Antebellum North	1
ONE	
Setting the Stage of Black Freedom: Parades and “Presence” in the New Nation	21
TWO	
Black Politics but Not Black People: Early Minstrelsy, “White Slavery,” and the Wedge of “Blackness”	50
THREE	
Washington and the Slave: Black Deformations, Proslavery Domesticity, and Re-Staging the Birth of the Nation	75
FOUR	
The Theatocracy of Antebellum Social Reform: “Monkeyism” and the Mode of Romantic Racialism	107
FIVE	
Melodrama and the Performance of Slave Testimony; or, William Wells Brown’s Inability to Escape	136
Epilogue: No Exit, but a New Stage	165
Notes	171
Index	207